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THE WEEK 3
HILLMAN, CPA AND PAC *John C. Cort* 6
CRY OF THE JUST—1944 (*Verse*) *A. F.* 9
EZRA POUND: POET WITHOUT A COUNTRY *Oliver W. Evans* 10
THE STAGE *Kappo Phelan* 16
THE SCREEN *Philip T. Hartung* 19
FALL BOOKS 20

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Russia II

IN ORDER to understand Russian foreign policy, one thing must always be remembered. The present generation of men in power in the Kremlin spent the most impressionable years of their lives "on the run" from the Czarist police. They knew no security whatever, either as individuals or as a group. And naturally they came to view all constituted authority as the enemy. When they themselves established their own constituted authority, they could not shed, as a duck does water, the psychological bent and twist their formation had imposed upon them. Never having had security, it was now imperative that they should have it—and have it with a degree of certainty which must always seem exaggerated to persons who have never desperately lacked it. The quest for security, then, became for the older Soviet generation a veritable "search for the blue flower." And, just as with the romantics this longing for the unattainable produced sad emotional excesses, so the Russian longing for security tends to be never-ending and expansionist. Only to the extent that the masters of the Kremlin honestly believe a neighbor friendly toward them will they desist from trying to capture or neutralize him.

For long years between the wars the Russians looked upon the Baltic States and Poland not only as potential spearheads for some stronger and more dangerous enemy, but as "fronts" for all kinds of irridentist plottings, supported and subsidized by the enemies of the socialist fatherland. This was inevitable. Even though the suspicions may have been gravely exaggerated. For nothing breeds suspicion like insecurity. And the Stalin régime was shaped and formed in insecurity.

To understand this psychology is to understand, for instance, the Polish quarrel. When Stalin first came to an agreement with the London Polish Government in Exile, he probably did so sincerely, thinking that the frontier question would be settled his way without too much trouble. It was not settled his way—indeed it was not even broached for a long time. Quickly his suspicions of Russophobia on the part of the London Poles made him feel that security demanded more than the territorial claims he presented. Security came to demand a government in the rest of Poland which should not merely be friendly, but should be in substance appointed from Moscow. And that is the pattern which the suspicion-security mind will repeat indefinitely.

There are two ways to deal with this. There is the tough way, which will almost certainly lead to another world conflict. There is the way of patience and tact, which might possibly spare us from such a conflict. And this second way is tremendously difficult, if only because it is so hard to allow for an obsessed suspicion in the other fellow without oneself becoming obsessed in the process. It is all the more difficult as between governments when one of the governments is convinced that the individuals in power must remain in power indefinitely, for the welfare of the state, whereas in the other government the will of the people can "drive the rascals out." For in the first instance personal security, ideology and national interest tend to become inextricably interwoven and jointly to reinforce the touchiness.

There is, however, a possible ray of sunlight in the cloudy picture. When the present generation of higher functionaries dies, their successors will be men who have never been chased but have themselves been the chasers. The mentality of these men will remain a suspicious mentality, because they have been taught and forced to be suspicious, but it may be a mentality in which suspicion is not the trigger to set off the gun, but merely a reasonable prudence and check. If this be true, the most difficult years are those which lie immediately ahead of us; we can reasonably expect, one day, only the tension usual between great powers with overlapping circles of interest.

Dumbarton Oaks

THE Dumbarton Oaks proposals are probably about the most we could expect, given the world we live in. They obviously were drafted with more than half an eye cocked at the temper of the US Senate. This was undoubtedly a sensible procedure, for if the Senate were to throw out a more forthright scheme, the conference and all that preceded it and will follow it will have been

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a waste of time. But the result is to suggest an international instrument with many flaws. It will be an instrument dominated by ourselves, Russia and England. If it ever comes into being, its goodness or badness will therefore principally depend upon what these three powers do, upon what use they put the instrument to.

Kudzu Spreads in Georgia

WHETHER the question be rural education, family security or medical care, the most needful area for national attention is our South. Not only because so much of the Southern economy still is devoted to the production of raw materials, which are exchanged for more costly manufactured products from other sections of the country; but primarily because one-crop (cotton or tobacco) cultivation has exhausted the farmer's land. Only by keeping farm wages at from 75¢ to $1.00 a day has the Southern farmer been able at all to make a go of things—and then with considerable help from the government in recent years. Poverty is the basic problem of our South. That is an intolerable situation.

All this lends considerable interest to the Georgia experiments which have so caught the fancy of the Editor of *Business Week*. The hero of the piece is one Cason J. Callaway, formerly president of Callaway Mills of LaGrange, Ga., and still a director of United States Steel and a New York bank. He has retired to his 25,000 acres near Columbus, Ga., to devote himself to a hobby he has had for twenty years: the scientific farming which will rebuild Georgia's depleted soil. He was so successful with the 700 acres he planted in 1940 with kudzu, a perennial which makes good fodder and rebuilds the soil, that three years later he reported a return of $25 to $35 per acre. There is a statewide goal of a million acres in kudzu by 1950.

The latest Callaway device is the formation of a hundred small corporations capitalized at $10,000 each (seven stockholders to kick in $1,000 apiece and the government to lend $3,000). Each corporation would then acquire a hundred acres, appoint a farm manager and devote 40 percent of its capital to building up the land, with the help of the Soil Conservation Service and the Agricultural Extension Service. Seventy-five of these new corporations are already on the way.

The only opposition thus far noted comes from the regional director of the CIO, who asks some extremely pertinent questions about hiring and firing, wages, housing, health, collective bargaining and social security. They have to be ironed out. But the potentialities of the Georgia project are of vital interest to all American states: other Southern states now vainly struggling with depleted land and all other sections of the country, which have a real stake in the South's prosperity.

Al Smith and Wendell Willkie

THE coolness thus far manifest in the current presidential campaign should not lead us to forget the impact of former national electoral contests. The drama of those earlier years won for certain unsuccessful presidential aspirants literally millions of the most devoted followers. Al Smith and Wendell Willkie made their way into American homes and hearts to stay.

To Al Smith the 1928 campaign was the peak of a long career in the service of his fellow-citizens. His defeat was a blow from which he never fully recovered. Not because it was a personal rejection. Al Smith was convinced, rightly or wrongly, that he had been defeated solely on account of the religious faith to which he adhered so staunchly. What cut him to the heart was, in fact, the way his defeat was brought about. That was a body blow to his warm confidence in the fairness and tolerance of his fellow-Americans. Wendell Willkie, on the other hand, who had arrived after success in big business rather than a hard struggle up from the city streets, had no such reason to feel doleful in 1940. He had received the highest vote ever cast for a Republican candidate. After the adverse verdict he went right on talking and kept on until he had talked himself right out of the 1944 candidacy.

In addition to the warmth of their followings there were many other similarities between the two men. Both were open and honest. Al Smith got his start with Tammany Hall and spent his whole life prior to '28 in politics, but his record for honesty in office and in quest of office was impeccable. He always spoke out openly for what he stood for. Mr. Willkie had the bluff sort of honesty which could dismiss things he had said in 1940 as "campaign talk" but left no doubt in the minds of his 1944 followers what ideas he had finally decided on, whatever the result.

Because of his internationalist ideas and his admission that much of the New Deal had to be retained, Wendell Willkie finally earned the magic accolade of "liberal." After '28 Al Smith, increasingly critical of things like boondoggling, was seldom regarded in that light. But that is a serious misconception. He was a master of government in the interests of the people. His legislative record on social legislation—on wages, hours, working conditions, social security—is a record of accomplishment unsurpassed. He was to the very last at the forefront in charitable enterprises. It was Al Smith who made possible the resurgence of the Democratic Party along progressive lines; Wendell Willkie was the one figure who could have led the current Republicans into genuinely constructive channels. Both contributed immeasurably to the development of the conscience of the nation.

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In Boston

THE DRUNK had his arms round a lamp post on Harvard Square and then he sagged down until he lay at the foot of the lamp post as though he had been executed by a firing squad, but that would only be when the men are tied to posts; it is different when they stand in front of the trench they have dug, for then the bullets jolt them upward and backward. They do not sag at all. At the Peace Conference in Paris they had moving pictures which they had brought back from the Baltic and these were shown to the American delegation in proof of something, but the only thing one members is that the German firing squads were more disciplined than were the Russian; consequently there was less confusion and the men they executed died quickly whereas sometimes the Russian squads would be very nervous and there would be men who were not killed at once and then they would have to shoot again. Both sides were shooting peasants and the American mission which took the pictures had been wandering round with the Russians and with the Germans—the war was over—and it is very hard to remember who was fighting whom. There would be a hundred men in a field and they would all be sitting down taking off their boots as if they were all tired and were going to bed. There would be a great heap of boots. And then some of them would get up and walk over to take the places of the ten who had just been shot. After each volley some men would get up and walk toward the trench and sometimes there would be more men than there were places for them to stand; they only shot ten in a batch and so sometimes a man would walk over toward the trench and find that the places were filled and then he would walk back a little way and wait for his turn. When the men reached their places they stood at attention facing the firing squad and not one of them had to be led to his place. No one showed any fear but there was one man who was very angry and in the silent film he cursed everyone and talked and shook his fist until suddenly he straightened up and jolted upward and back into the trench with the sudden click of a toy on the sidewalk.

The drunk lying at the foot of the lamp post in Harvard Square looked more like the bodies of the young men of Grenoble for whose recent execution posts were available because after all there were only a few of them and there was plenty of time. Moving pictures are very useful because now one can know exactly how a body acts when it is hit by several bullets at once and that it never falls the way it does in "Tosca." Similarly it was the early French motion picture camera which made it possible for Toulouse-Lautrec to paint his race horses as they really run.

We had returned from France and the ship had stopped for a day in Boston. There had been the first green grass, the first trees round the fort on the island in the Harbor, and then the dark warehouse on the dock, the American voices of the men and then the subway to Park Street Under and Harvard Square. There had been this inexplicable haste to reach Cambridge with, under the lamp post, the executed drunk. After the other war. Years ago. Returning from somewhere, returning from the other war, from all wars, from all executions, anticipating Mr. Chamberlain, to the wonderful peace which was to be ours for all our times.

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Cambridge and Boston are still there; the drunks are still there, the Old Howard is still there. The wars are with us still. And of course the Atheneum and Beacon Hill. The golden dome of the State House is painted gray. There is a very neat victory garden on the Common and opposite the Copley Plaza there is a sign on a wooden shelter which says "Pick Up Station." Two Waves were standing in the shelter but of course, after a while, one got the idea, remembering places like Newton Center, Mattapan, Coolidge Corner, and that Boston was Beacon Hill surrounded by interminable suburbs. It proved still possible to be given tea in Louisburg Square with a Sargent on the wall throwing so recent a past into a century as distant as had the portrait been a Copley. Yet hearing the talk, there had been no change. Still there were good dances and poor dances judged by the standing of the hotel in which they were given; still the only man that a girl could think of would be a Harvard man, and in spite of everything he still must wear a brown hat; still there were good clubs and clubs with too many New Yorkers. An intermediate station on the Cambridge Subway, Kendall or Central, still seemed an extraordinary place furnishing or absorbing from the train people who, one felt, would not like to be observed by the better classes who knew but the station Harvard, the station Park Street Under; there was South Boston still unvisited.

That was a small world one had known and still it was there. It had serious attraction and virtue. No matter whether it had flowered or had seen its Indian Summer or whatever Mr. Van Wyck Brooks might say of it, there had remained and there still remains a specific Boston quality. The great men are dead but they are always dead everywhere; and if one felt something of Boston only in King's Chapel reading the epitaphs, or outside Trinity where Phillips Brooks is prompted to speak or urged to silence by a ghost; or taking tea in Louisburg Square—that was because elsewhere in Boston it was only America.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Hillman, CPA and PAC

What's it all about?

John C. Cort

"IT'S *YOUR* Country . . . Why Let Sidney Hillman Run It? Vote for Dewey and Bricker." This is the message trumpeted on billboards and in newspaper advertisements to the people of Pittsburgh by the local Republican Party. In a thousand variations it is also the message of national Republican spokesmen to the people of America. Hardly a day goes by that Herbert Brownell, Republican national chairman, doesn't ring some change or other on the awful theme. Hardly a night passes that Governor Bricker doesn't terrify some audience with the vision of Sidney Hillman and his communist cohorts already in control of the Democratic Party and only a hop-skip-and-jump from full sovereignty in Washington. This is no literary hyperbole. In a recent speech at Portland, Maine, Governor Bricker said, in so many words, that the New Deal has "abdicated its cause and its leadership to the Browder-Hillman axis."

Press and radio, with few exceptions, have hammered at the same warning. The outcry ranges upward or downward from the epileptic howlings of the Hearst Press through the plausible alarm of Henry J. Taylor to the quiet despair of Arthur Krock. Strangely enough, for a long time the only Republican who ignored this major campaign issue was, to his credit, the Presidential candidate himself, Governor Dewey. Now even he, stung by the volley of buckshot in the President's opening gun of September 23, has echoed the chorus: "He [Roosevelt] is indispensable to Sidney Hillman and the Political Action Committee, to Earl Browder, etc."

In this general uproar, how much is based on sober truth, how much on ignorance, exaggeration, distortion, hysteria, shameless lying, or all five? How much of a threat to American government are Hillman, the communists and the CIO's Political Action Committee? As a matter of fact, where does one leave off and the others begin? The night is dark, and vague; frightening shapes are hurtling all about. Stick close, and we'll try to work our way out of this mess.

To begin with, the picture of Sidney Hillman as a kind of John L. Lewis busily king-making with a bigger and better version of Labor's Non-Partisan League is one that is simply and plainly irrecognizable to anyone who knows the most elementary facts about the American labor movement. Hillman is no Lewis, from a power-wise angle, by any stretch of even a Republican imagination. He doesn't control the CIO nor does he control, or dominate, either the left or right wing of the CIO. He controls the Amalgamated Clothing Workers—but good—and just about nobody else. He is a very capable, energetic labor leader who probably got the job as PAC chairman for his ability, his standing at the White House, his political experience, and, above all, because he didn't have to worry about the Amalgamated getting loose and so could devote every minute of his time to putting PAC on the political map. Which he has certainly done.

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Is Hillman a communist? The evidence against this claim is so strong that even PAC's enemies don't openly make it. Actually, no labor czar in the AFL ever hunted down Stalinists with more relentless zest than Hillman in his own union. In the Amalgamated today they are as inconspicuous as nazis in liberated Paris. During March, 1941, when Hillman was serving his unsuccessful term as co-chairman of the Office of Production Management with William Knudsen, the following remarks were printed in Moscow: "The American bourgeoisie is using Hillman in a vicious campaign against the working class. . . . He is an enemy of the working class, an enemy of the Communist Party and a ferocious enemy of the Soviet Union."

After Hitler's attack on Russia, Lewis lost and Hillman gained in communist favor, but so too did every other isolationist and interventionist respectively in this country. Hillman's decision to work with the comrades, to use them for what they were worth to him, dates from the formation of PAC in July, 1943, and his selection as its chairman. At that time he was definitely a has-been, a cipher in the American labor movement. He had gained nothing from the Washington sabbatical and had lost much ground in the CIO. At one point Lewis had almost read him out of the organization. Even after Lewis started reading himself out, there was talk that relations between Phil Murray, Lewis's successor, and Hillman were none too friendly. The latter literally

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came from nowhere to his present peak of prominence.

As a matter of fact, Hillman's record vis-à-vis the communists would still be highly respectable if it were not for one bad error of strategy on his part: the alliance with the Stalinists that wrested control of New York's American Labor Party from the right wing, which thereupon broke away to form the new Liberal Party. Queerly enough, as recently as November, 1942, Hillman had supported John J. Bennett, Democratic candidate for governor, while both left and right wings of the ALP were united on Dean Alfange. The subsequent understanding seems to have been that Hillman could have the upstate organization for what it was worth, which was practically nothing, while the comrades held on to the big vote-producing counties of New York City. Chances are that Mr. Hillman will live to regret this *mésalliance* even more than he very probably does today. An important communist union official recently made the private remark that "we already have our guns trained on Hillman." And the latter would be a far stupider man than he is, which is not stupid at all, if he did not remember their ancient hatred very vividly indeed, or if he has not learned just how little they can be trusted. He probably knows as well as Benjamin Stolberg that a Stalinist's idea of a united front is: "I confuse you and you collaborate with me." Well, perhaps not quite as well.

"But if Hillman is very far from being an agent of Moscow, surely as an agent of Marx he is almost as dangerous." This statement too falls apart under examination. Despite his Marxist youth and trips to Russia, Sidney Hillman is today as good an example as you could find in America of the labor leader who preaches, and practices, the theory of capital-labor cooperation for mutual interest, the theory of let's-reform-capitalism-and-make-it-work. Actually a typical speech of Hillman's on the function of labor in industry sounds far more like a papal encyclical than a Marxist tract, and it would be an encouraging thing indeed if a few more Catholic labor leaders in this country knew as much of Catholic social doctrine as Hillman regularly preaches. It is also an interesting fact that the PAC program not only plunks for "free enterprise" but contains a plan for economic self-government that is the only thing in the campaign that can be likened to the "vocational-group" planning of the Popes. This is more the work of encyclical-conscious, Catholic Phil Murray, however, than of Sidney Hillman.

Then, of course, there is the Democratic Convention in Chicago and the "clear it with Sidney" business, which has been denied, and the turning down of Byrnes as a vice-presidential candidate, which has not been denied. There is no question that Hillman's tactics at the convention were a lesson in poor politics—they influenced people well enough, but they certainly made no friends. To begin with, he was neither a delegate nor a member of the party. On the other hand, Phil Murray was both. It would have been perfectly simple for Murray to carry the play—and very much healthier for Hillman, PAC and the Democratic campaign.

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Of course, Murray did share the play to a much greater extent than anyone would ever think from reading the papers or listening to the commentators. In short, one cannot escape the conclusion that Sidney Hillman would never have created the sensation he has were it not for two absolutely uncontestable facts: (1) He is a Jew; (2) he was born in Lithuania, which was then part of czarist Russia and is now part of communist Russia, a misfortune that obviously makes him responsible for the evils of both régimes. It is true that the CIO's executive board should have been able to figure out what would happen if PAC ever attained half the success they hoped for it. They should have known more about American prejudice and the guerrilla tactics of American politics. Their ignorance, however, doesn't excuse for a minute the bigotry or the malice or the dirty, smirking innuendo that has marked the anti-Hillman campaign. It might be noted in passing that the filthiness of the Hearst Press on this particular score simply has to be seen to be believed.

We come then to the man who says, "Hillman may not be as black or as red as he's painted, but the fact remains that the communists control the CIO and therefore they must control PAC." The answer to this is: "Unadulterated drivel." (Full stop for emphasis.) It cannot be repeated too often or too loudly that the communists never have, and do not now, control or dominate the national CIO. Membership in the unions they do control still amounts to about a fourth of total CIO membership, which means they must always be badly outvoted in any test of strength with the right wing. It is true that if they had gained about three more pro-communist members on the executive board of the gigantic Auto Workers' Union at the latter's recent convention, there might have been cause for alarm. The fact is, however, that they not only did not gain three, but they lost two members, a third changed sides, and they may yet lose a fourth if the discredited Lew Michener is replaced by a right-winger.

As for the make-up and personnel of the national PAC, it is only necessary to point out that its members are, besides Hillman: Dave McDonald and Van Bittner from the solidly right-wing steelworkers; R. J. Thomas, right-

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wing president of the auto workers; Sherman Dalrymple, ditto from the rubber workers; and Albert Fitzgerald, fellow traveler from the one big CP-controlled union, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers. In short, one vote in six.

Of the 14 PAC regional directors, nearly all of whom are fresh from New Deal agencies, not even the Dies Committee has been able to unearth any evidence worth presenting. It has simply made the charge of "red control" without the tedious formality of evidence. The one weak spot in the national set-up is the legal department, which consists of Lee Pressman, veteran fellow traveler, and John Abt, whose sister and wife work for CP organizations and who might therefore be said to be doubtful. In general, however, the set-up is relatively pure.

There is no disputing the fact that in certain *local* PAC's, on the other hand, the danger of Stalinist penetration and control has been much more real. Since the Communist Party officially disbanded itself a few months ago and became the Communist Political Association, loyal comrades have probably concentrated most of their energies, outside the ALP, on PAC activity, either for the CIO itself or for the National Citizens' PAC, a non-union offshoot. It does so happen that in certain cities, the CPA's, by their control of the small unions, their busy, dogged way of getting themselves elected delegates and their passionate fidelity in attending meetings, have come to control the Industrial Union Council, local CIO central body. In some of these cities they also control the local PAC, and many people would naturally say, "Isn't this a horrible thing? Here the communists are achieving a power and influence in local politics that they could never have gained under their own steam."

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But look more closely. It has been evident for some time that the 105,000 top-vote that is all the Browder ticket was ever able to poll in a national election is no longer a reliable index of communist strength in this country. Discount the intellectual battalion, if you like, still, anyone who controls unions with over a million membership is not going to remain politically impotent forever—not in America—PAC or no PAC. In fact, even before PAC, various CP-dominated Industrial Councils were neck-deep in local politics and beginning to elect candidates under non-communist labels. In New York City, long before PAC was even dreamed of, they were largely instrumental in the election of pro-communist councilmen like Michael Quill and A. Clayton Powell, Jr., and the pro-CP Congressman, Vito Marcantonio.

And here is a strange, but true and important development—in some cities the organization of PAC has actually frustrated the comrades' use of local CIO control for political purposes. Take as an example the great union city of Detroit. Several years ago, thanks largely to the indifference of right-wing delegates, the Wayne County (Detroit) CIO Industrial Council came under left-wing domination. Political candidates endorsed by that council were naturally those, and those only, acceptable to the CP.

Then came PAC and, presumably because they became interested enough to elect delegates and attend meetings, the right-wing unions gained control of the Wayne County PAC. Just last month, as a case in point, the left wing fought furiously to block an endorsement of Congressman John Lesinski, in spite of his splendid labor record, because the latter had attacked Russian policy toward Poland. Thanks to PAC the communists were badly defeated. This is something for the "Red Menace" boys to think about.

And so finally, picking our way through the pile of rubbish about Hillman and the communists, we arrive by the back door at PAC itself. First, some basic data. PAC was set up at the July, 1943, meeting of the CIO's executive board as a result of the terrific licking that pro-labor forces took at the polls in the previous November elections. Its aims were to sell its own point of view to the American people, particularly labor; get out the labor vote; and so re-elect President Roosevelt and give him a sympathetic Congress. It had plenty of money from union contributions, but under the Smith-Connally law it could only spend this in primary campaigns and State elections. Actually it spent only $67,320 directly for these purposes before the fund was frozen on July 23 at the end of the Democratic Convention. For all purposes, mostly salaries and publicity, it spent $371,086 before July 23. From then on expenditures had to come out of individual contributions, and a campaign was started to persuade CIO members to give "a buck for Roosevelt." This campaign has been far from a howling success and as of September 23, two months later, total contributions were only $378,000, or about a quarter of the $1,500,000 goal.

In the light of these figures it is ironic that Governor Bricker and other Republican spokesmen should have set up such a howl about the "gigantic slush fund," "millions of dollars," etc., with which PAC has allegedly bought control of the Democratic Party. It becomes excruciatingly ironic when you realize that, as Hillman testified before the House Campaign Committee, "in 1940 . . . the Republican Party and its cooperating groups collected and spent some $17,000,000 on behalf of their candidates."

Where PAC can and has made up for its financial weakness is in the quality of its propaganda,

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which even its critics admit is tops, and in its zeal and ability in organizing CIO members to do the laborious foot-work of ringing doorbells that has always been the cornerstone of political success in this country.

Of course, the central argument against PAC itself, or the idea of PAC as such, is that a trade union is an economic organization and has no right committing members who joined it for economic purposes to a political program with which they may be in violent disagreement. This is the most plausible expression of the nobody's-going-to-tell-me-how-to-vote school. It is also the main burden of an article in the *Reader's Digest* by William Mullins, a member of the Newspaper Guild (CIO). For support he appealed to Samuel Gompers, perennial president of the AFL until 1924, who was in favor of labor's supporting legislators, but not governors or presidents, because the latter represent whole parties and therefore labor opposition would antagonize whole parties and that is bad, especially if the wrong party wins.

Mr. Mullins uses Gompers for all he is worth, but he doesn't seem to consider the fact that if it is wrong for a union to commit its dissident minority in favor of a Presidential candidate, it is equally wrong to do so in favor of a Congressional candidate. It would also be wrong for *any* non-political, non-unanimous organization to endorse any political candidate. Besides which, the hands-off policy of Mr. Gompers, continued faithfully by William Green, brought the AFL to the point where in 1932 it had all of 1,500,000 members, the country had 13,000,000 unemployed, and Washington had a nice fat anti-labor administration. Hardly a record of sensational success in a country of 35,000,000 unorganized workers and fabulous industrial power. (By the way, it should be noted that already in the 1944 campaign over 20 state federations of the AFL have ignored Gompers and endorsed Roosevelt.)

Nevertheless, it is perfectly true that in an ideal democracy it would probably be better for unions to stay out of politics. This would be a democracy in which everybody voted in both elections and primaries, wherein party leaders were just as carefully scrutinized and much more carefully chosen than political candidates are now, wherein all office-holders judged every issue purely on its merits—a democracy, in short, wherein every voter and every official took an active, intelligent and honest part, informing himself thoroughly on every important question. If you happen to see such a democracy lying around somewhere, please let us know.

Meanwhile we have a democracy of political machines, indifferent voters, high-powered pressure groups of all kinds and highly susceptible politicians—of all kinds. We have also a democracy in which industrial employment, wages, prices and such like are largely determined or influenced by political policy, or the lack of political policy. We have a democracy wherein the employing class is highly organized, more than amply supplied with funds and *has in actual fact infiltrated, penetrated, dominated and controlled one of the two major parties, the Republican Party, since the first administration of General Grant.*

As Jimmy Durante would say, "that's the conditions that prevail." Actually, in PAC the CIO is doing nothing more or less than the ancient, moss-covered AFL pastime of "rewarding friends and punishing enemies." The only difference is that the AFL did it as the AFL has usually done things—inefficiently, halfheartedly, with bumbling, unimaginative lack of either enthusiasm or skill. PAC, on the other hand, has really done a job, and it is this simple fact that so infuriates the opposition. Labor in politics was perfectly all right as long as it remained harmlessly ineffectual. The unforgivable sin was that American labor should finally wake up and begin to throw its weight around with all the professional earnestness of a Notre Dame fullback running interference.

And so the howl went up. It is a howl so loud, so expensive, and for the most part so dishonest that if there were no other argument on the face of the earth, it would be obvious, for that one reason alone, that an organization like PAC is indeed necessary to protect labor's skin from such powerful, unscrupulous forces.

Cry of the Just—1944

We, who no longer are protected
By the flight of birds or the appearance of entrails,
Who must ourselves avoid the pilotless robot,
And defend our flesh against the anonymity of tank encirclement
Still believe, we who are, and who do, evil, in a good Power,
Present in foxholes, permanent amongst our ruins.
What do we then expect of Him, who destroy ourselves and our dreams?
Treading not softly upon liberty, wrecking charity as we ruin cathedrals
We daily offer Him holocaust of hospitals, blown-up busloads of civilians,
What can we require of Him, who have trampled His whole creation?
Since He suffers in every sufferer, we have prolonged His passion
And increased His torment beyond the vilest imagination of our hearts;
Yet we continue to beseech Him, Whom we crucify hourly anew,
Wagging our heads, we pray, if Thou be Whom Thou sayest, save then Thyself also and us.

A. F.

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Ezra Pound: Poet Without a Country

Fate of an expatriate

Oliver W. Evans

THE POET who used to remark of the United States that it was "a country without a man" (that is, a man capable of leadership) has experienced the backfire of his own epigram: he is now a man without a country. Ezra Pound, one of Mussolini's most ardent non-Italian admirers, and sometimes referred to as the "Lord Haw-Haw of America," was in July, 1943, formally indicted for treason *in absente reo,* and, since the collapse of the fascist government, finds himself politically stranded in northern Italy, near Genoa.

Pound has been living in Europe for thirty-eight years. When he was twenty-one, after receiving his master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania, he was awarded a fellowship, and spent a year traveling in Spain, France and Italy. He returned, like many another romantically inclined young graduate student who had had a taste of Europe, with a rather touristical and picture-postcard notion of Continental, and particularly of Mediterranean, life. He had acquired a few harmless affectations (he did not bother his head with politics at this time), and with these he settled down to his first full-time job as English instructor at Wabash College, Indiana—a little resignedly, for the Indiana prairies could not hope to compete in glamor with the Piazza della Signoria. His martyrdom, however, was short-lived: Wabash, at the end of four months, found him too Bohemian for its tastes, and released him from his duties. Pound, in a great huff, returned to Europe, where, he imagined, he was "understood," and America became henceforth in his eyes a symbol of hypocrisy, bigotry and cultural sterility.

It is important to realize that the origin of Pound's dislike for America is a youthful and wholly irrational pique. Pound has never known what this country is really like: in all those years of exile he has only made one brief, hurried return visit, and that after thirty-one years had gone by. His conception of American life and culture today is as distorted as that which he took back to Europe with him in 1907; it is, indeed, in every fundamental way the same conception. This explains the naïve quality of the assumptions underlying many of his diatribes: he is forever attacking giants which do not exist.

Settling in Venice, the youthful exile wrote and published some of the verses which won for him such an early reputation, meanwhile reading omnivorously and continuing, with an almost desperate religiosity, his visits to the museums and art galleries. Pound has the advantage of an amazingly acquisitive, though notoriously fickle, mind, and he was quick to exploit this advantage to the utmost as a means of impressing his contemporaries with his erudition. The desire to impress, at almost any cost, is the mainspring of Pound's personality. Thus, when he left Venice and went to live in London, he mystified his new acquaintances by signing his letters with a Chinese seal, amused them by wearing flowing robes while he pottered about cooking meals to which he had invited them, and bored them by playing his compositions on a harpsichord. These acquaintances included, among others, Henry James, W. B. Yeats, the late Ford Madox Ford (then Ford Madox Hueffer), T. S. Eliot and Wyndham Lewis.

Pound had not been long in London before he launched the movement in poetry known as Imagism; this was the first of a long succession of "isms" with which his name was to be associated. He was the acknowledged leader of the movement, and as such came to exert considerable influence in America, where it enjoyed great success: Carl Sandburg, one of the American converts, has gone so far as to declare that Pound was "the greatest single influence in American poetry." When Imagism was at its height, Pound suddenly turned over its leadership to Amy Lowell, and identified himself with a new revolutionary movement called Vorticism, which insisted, rather vaguely, upon "necessary intellectual blizzards." He planned and edited a publication, *Blast,* only one issue of which ever appeared, and at the same time acted as foreign editor for Harriet Monroe's newly founded *Poetry.*

A more important feature of the poet's residence in England, however—one which was to have a permanent effect on his ways of thinking and determine to a certain extent the direction of his political views—was his contact with the theory, current in certain London literary circles, of the superiority of Mediterranean culture over that of the northern European, and particularly

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Anglo-Saxon, civilization. This idea did not originate, as one might imagine, with the English expatriate poets of the Romantic period (the interest which Byron, Shelley, Keats and even Browning had in Italy was a purely antiquarian interest; they regarded the natives as picturesque but unworthy heirs to the grandeur that was Rome). The idealization of the Italian *popolano* is first seen clearly in the writings of England's distinguished expatriate, John Addington Symonds, and of Samuel Butler. These men, Victorian rebels both, saw a favorable contrast to the materialism and moral hypocrisy of the British nineteenth-century middle class in the simple, easy-going, relatively amoral life of the Italian peasants. The arts, they believed, could flourish better in such an environment, and they pointed for proof to the cultural accomplishments of many Mediterranean peasants. Thus, Symonds was enchanted to find an illiterate Tuscan farmer who could recite canto after canto of Dante's "Divine Comedy,"—without, to be sure, knowing just what it was all about, but vividly conscious of its melodic beauty and of the drama and pathos of some of its situations.

★

There was, it must be admitted, some factual foundation for this idea, but in the proportions which it came to assume (that is, that Anglo-Saxons were prudes and insensitive boors at heart) it was merely so much romantic nonsense—a myth, the Mediterranean myth, so to speak. It is extraordinary how this idea took hold in England: for a quite considerable period almost anything Italian or French, of a cultural and particularly of an artistic nature, was considered, *ergo*, superior to the native product; and to this curious type of inverted snobbery some of the most influential literary minds in England became addicted. The first writers to follow in Symonds's wake were the so-called decadents of the *Yellow Book* period: Oscar Wilde, Ernest Dowson and the poet-painter Aubrey Beardsley. These men, who would have come perilously close to being misfits in almost any society, were quick to seize upon the Mediterranean myth as a justification for the ivory tower in which they claimed they were forced to live at home. It is revealing, in this connection, to note that they drew their influences almost exclusively from contemporary French poets, notably the Symbolists. Following this relatively unimportant group came a whole host of expatriate and near-expatriate British authors, among them George Moore, Arnold Bennett, Norman Douglas, D. H. Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford (who, reminding one of Pound, left England in a huff after the first World War, vowing never to return) and, more latterly, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. For

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proof that the myth still survives one need only refer to the passage by Allen Tate (who came under Ford's influence in France) in "Reactionary Essays in Poetry and Ideas" which relates how, merely on the strength of his own assertion that he was a poet, he was enabled to obtain a letter of credit in a small French village where he was entirely unknown; and to Pound's own account of how the librarian in a small Italian town opened up the building on an official holiday in order to let him (again entirely unknown) examine certain manuscripts. Both these incidents are doubtless true, yet the inferences which Tate and Pound have drawn from them are wholly unwarranted. It is scarcely possible to overestimate the importance of this myth in accounting for Pound's recent political sympathies; and it is easy to see why, on this basis, he dismisses Hitler as a "yelping hysteric," yet exalts Mussolini over every living statesman.

Thus Pound, who had sought a refuge in England from the vulgarity of his homeland, went his fellow-expatriate, James, one better by becoming a double exile, this time from England and everything which he imagined to be typical of Anglo-American civilization. In 1920 he went to Paris, where for the next four years he was a familiar figure in the Montparnasse section, which at that time was filled with American expatriates. By this time he had become something of a celebrity: in addition to having published over twenty volumes, chiefly poetry and translations, he had somehow managed to pick up a truly amazing variety of languages and dialects, ancient and modern. He was more or less familiar with Greek, Latin, Provençal, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Chinese and Japanese, to name only a few,and in his books he quoted constantly from these and other languages, betraying, in all this ostentatious erudition, his fatal weakness for impressing his readers with the multifariousness of his accomplishments. Though his Italian and Oriental translations have received their share of praise, Pound's linguistic attainments were of necessity superficial. His very versatility prevented him from ever exhausting any subject; profundity and accuracy thus were sacrificed to mere variety, so that Harriet Monroe wrote of him that his knowledge of European poetry was "as exhaustive as it is inaccurate." Still more superficial was his knowledge of music. In spite of this, and his own admission, several years earlier, that he was almost entirely tone deaf, he composed the music for two operas, *Le Testament* and *Guido Cavalcanti,* the former of which enjoyed a partial performance in Paris.

★

Another major weakness in Pound's character is thus revealed: his apparently constitutional inability to remain interested for very long in any one thing, or, indeed, in any one place. Imagism was abandoned for Vorticism, Vorticism for Dadaism, Dadaism for Surrealism; America for England, England for France, France, finally, for Italy. Even Pound's most ardent admirers, such as Ford, were alarmed at this defect in his personality, in reality the expression of a neurotic *ennui,* and he became notorious as an intellectual weathervane. Meanwhile, he continued his old tricks of shocking his acquaintances: there is the story, for instance, of his taking out a young lady to dinner and refusing to speak to her in anything but ancient Greek; when he deposited her at her door he is said to have expressed himself as never having spent a more enjoyable evening. He sported a velvet beret and flowing tie, in the approved "Trilby" fashion, and surrounded himself with a group of disciples, among them Joyce (for whose "Ulysses" he found a publisher); the young Hemingway, who submitted some of his stories for criticism; and T. S. Eliot, who dedicated "The Waste Land" to Pound, whom he called on the flyleaf, *il miglior fabbro.*

In 1924, tiring of Paris, where, one infers, there were too many Americans for his peace of mind, Pound took up residence in Italy. He has remained there ever since, the reasons for this extraordinary constancy being the admiration which he came to conceive a few years later for Mussolini, and the fact that in Rapallo, where he acquired a rambling old *palazzo,* he was a much larger fish in a much smaller pond that he had been in either Paris or London: his vanity had grown to the point where he could not tolerate competition as a literary personality. He continued to produce volume after volume, the most noteworthy of which was the series of "Cantos," issued intermittently in five separate books over a period of seventeen years. In these poems Pound has resort to all the many technical tricks at his command; for sheer virtuosity there is nothing quite like them in English.

★

His ambition was to write a vast epic which was to portray the mind-body-soul of twentieth-century man as Dante's poem did that of the late medieval and early rennaissance gentleman, but in practice he has deflected woefully from that intention. The action observes no logic either of time or of place: the author leaps indiscriminately and without warning from modern London to the Florence of Cosimo de' Medici, from Colonial New England to China in the eleventh century B.C., during the reign of the Emperor Kang Wang. There are innumerable and interminable digressions on almost every conceivable subject, the sole purpose of which is to dazzle the reader; these exceed the main body of the work in actual

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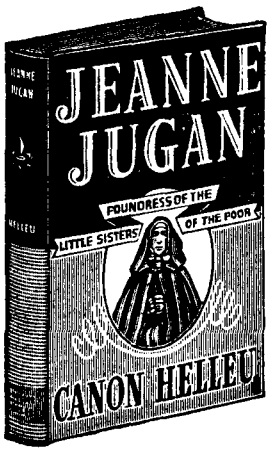

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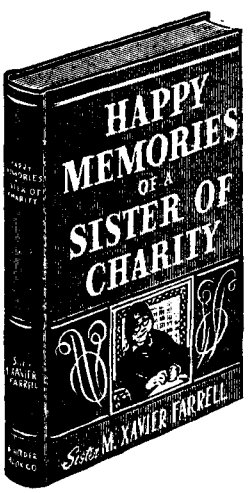

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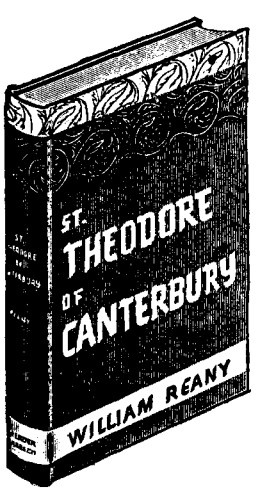

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number of lines, though it is often impossible to tell when digression ends and progression begins. There is a bewildering array of historical personages, major and minor; and the whole abounds in obscure and esoteric allusions, quotations from more than a dozen languages, and the usual Poundian typographical eccentricities. The total effect is chaotic and confusing in the extreme, and even those who had counted themselves among Pound's admirers were disappointed when the "Cantos" began making their appearance. Yeats noted that the new poems "had more style than form . . . a style constantly interrupted, broken, twisted into nervous obsession, nightmare, stammering confusion." And Harriet Monroe wrote: "his art has narrowed down to a merely literary inspiration. I cannot follow with sympathy his clever series of 'Cantos.'" An exception was Allen Tate, who, in what must surely be one of the most vapid critical pronouncements ever made, said glibly, "The 'Cantos' are not about anything. But they are distinguished poetry."

★

Pound's conversion to fascism came about by degrees. About 1930 he "discovered" economics. It was one of the few subjects upon which he considered himself not to be an authority, and he proceeded to remedy this situation by publishing, three years later, his "A.B.C. of Economics." He became particularly excited over Major C. H. Douglas's Social Credit system, and was one of its most eloquent propagandists. Seeing certain similarities between this and Mussolini's conception of the corporate state, he soon became attracted to the latter—as did many social crediters—and it was not long before he had embraced the whole totalitarian philosophy. The enormous irony of this gesture must have been obvious to anyone at all familiar with the poet's life. Pound, a blatant individualist, now had become an advocate of conformity and regimentation: the arch rebel was preaching discipline; the man who had railed against bigotry in the United States and England was writing articles against the Jews; the life-long enemy of literary censorship was saying, "A great deal of yawp about free press proves on examination to be a mere howl for irresponsibility," and quoting Mussolini's dictum, "Where the press is 'free,' it merely serves special interests."

He expressed his new political views in the form of a book, "Jefferson and/or Mussolini, or Fascism As I Have Seen It" (Liveright, 1935). One of his purposes in this curious work is to demonstrate the similarity, as political thinkers, between the author of our constitution and the man who in 1935 ordered the invasion of Abyssinia. This purpose leads him to make some really extraordinary assertions: "If you are hunting up bonds of sympathy between T.J. [abbreviation Mr. Pound's] and the Duce, put it first that they both hate machinery or at any rate the cooping up of men and making 'em all into UNITS." It is not quite clear whether he concludes that Jefferson was a fascist or Mussolini is a democrat; nevertheless, he would have us believe that their ideas coincide: "Do the driving ideas of Jefferson, Quincy Adams, Van Buren, or whoever else there is in the creditable pages of our history, FUNCTION actually in the America of this decade to the extent that they function in Italy under the DUCE? The writer's opinion is that they DON'T." The greater part of the book consists of invective against the United States and England. The British press is "a hired toady, a monkey garden where thought is taboo." Winston Churchill is a "silly opportunist, a half-breed American, determined to succeed, just like the cheapest of Mr. Lorimer's heroes." Harding, Coolidge and Hoover are "the three deficients," and Roosevelt is a "weak sister." "The word intellect," he wrote, "stinks in the normal Americo-English nostril." And again: "We descend from the pilgrim 'farvers.' A moral man in New York or Boston is one who objects to anyone else's committing adultery."

The Mediterranean myth is present throughout: "The Christian corruptions have never been able to affect the Italian; he takes it easy, the Latin sanity subsists" . . . "The Anglo-Saxon is particularly inept at understanding the Latin clarity of *Qui veut la fin veut les moyens*" . . . "There is the Latin habit of discussing abstract ideas. In America this habit is restricted to the small undesirable class who write for the *New Republic* and analogous nuisances." And so on. Witness, too, the egotism and bad taste of this sort of thing: "I have lived among the more refined spirits of my epoch because stupidity bores me and I have never yet found the intellectual pace too swift or the mental dynamite too high for my still unsatisfied appetite."

★

In his latest works, published since 1935, Pound has continued his attacks against England and the United States. Economic capitalism, the banking system, munitions manufacturers, universities and the Jews constitute his favorite targets. In Canto LII he tries to prove that Benjamin Franklin, who is on record as having donated money for the Philadelphia Jewish Synagogue, was an anti-Semite, and in *Culture* (New Directions, 1938) he naïvely observes that "The Gospels are somewhat anti-Semitic in tendency." In the latter book he works himself into an almost epileptic fury in describing the "dirty childishness of the English and American mind" and "the filth of American government through the reigns

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of Wilson, Harding, Coolidge and the supremely uncultivated, uneducated gross Hoover." The British Parliament, the Senate, and the House of Representatives, we learn, are "as obsolete as the Witenagemot," and the universities are run by "hirelings and boors."

Early in 1939, after an absence of eighteen years, Pound made a brief visit, for the purpose of lecturing, to the land of his birth. In spite of his contempt for American universities, and his characterization of their heads as "potbellied, toadying presidents of fat beaneries," his conscience proved sufficiently elastic for him to accept with complacency an honorary doctorate from Hamilton College in June. In the struggle between vanity and conscience, the outcome with Pound is always the same.

★

Shortly after his return to Italy, he found himself inconvenienced financially by the outbreak of the war, which prevented him from receiving his British and American royalties, and in January, 1941, he began a series of broadcasts over Radio Roma's "American Hour." He preached the benefits of fascism over those of democracy, and urged this country, as late as the attack on Pearl Harbor, to observe a policy of strict neutrality: "I want Roosevelt out of post-war matters. Let him stick to North America even if it means diminished gun sales for his pals." These talks brought Pound a notoriety that his books, which after all enjoyed a limited sale, could never have done alone, and he rapidly lost his few remaining friends in this country. *Poetry* commented editorially: "The time has come to put a formal end to the countenancing of Ezra Pound. He is following all too clearly in the steps of Benedict Arnold," and even Allen Tate has recently declared that he could have been indicted, not for treason, but for imbecility.

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The Odds On Mrs. Oakley

ABOUT lemons: the tattered condition of my passion for the affairs of the theater having gravely alarmed my employers, the following policy has been formulated by the editors and myself, viz: directly I have seen the last actor listed in the playbill of a piece (written by no matter whom, produced by no matter whom, starred in by no matter whom) the contents of which offends all sense, sensibility, dream-box and wit, I shall henceforth be free to depart into the island night and smaller concerns. If this announcement would seem to lay undue emphasis upon Harry Segall's dreadful error, I am sorry, but unfortunately his play exactly answers the description outlined above: my one program note after two afflicted hours being to check John Archer as an agreeable young actor whom I hope to see again. (*At the Cort.*)

Men To The Sea

WITH the assistance of Eddie Dowling as director, Herbert Kubly's play creeps into view as the most profoundly embarrassing vehicle on the street: ugly, dirty, maudlin and stupid. Dealing with the marital delinquencies of the juvenile wives of juvenile sailors in Brooklyn, the piece presents what I suppose to be an authentic problem; however, as this problem is examined only in its barest physiological aspect and as it is, at the same time, woefully clotted by the sort of haphazard mysticism and symbolism so dear to Mr. Dowling's public heart, the result is neither enlightening nor entertaining. I rather imagine the director's interest in this script sprang indeed from the primary error committed by the young author. In a character lovingly named "Duckworth" (and restlessly played at by Randolph Echols) Mr. Kubly has created that great adolescent fallacy, the *Rumoured And Quoted Hero*. This is that shadow who is all ways all times loved, spoken of rapturously, attended with care; who cautiously enters the stage only to *be* (pose) and never to *do* (act); and who, in this instance, is given to repeating, arbitrarily, long sections of the Old Testament and long passages of translated Villon. As well as being rumoured and quoted, it is also true that this Hero always always only *quotes* (page Mr. Maxwell A.!) He is, of course, not a creation at all; he is a daydream, denoting a process which is only useful in the arts when the day is cumulative and the dreaming not imprecise. I do believe the projection of the literate Hero must be, by virtue of its failures, exactly as difficult as it is attractive to masculine writers. At the risk of starting a Thurber war in the pages of this struggling sheet, I would urge Mr. Kubly to look to Djuna Barnes's "Dr. Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor" to discover a character whose library is vast but whose speculations and crescendi are always perceptible, and who is filled with curiosity as well as the mortal anguish. Yes, yes. (*At the National.*)

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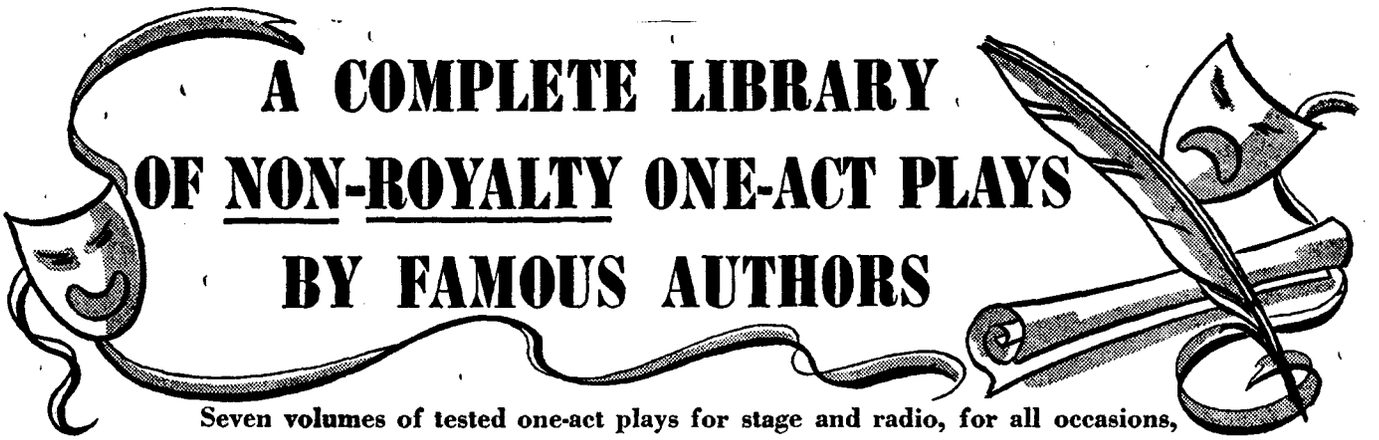

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The performances are largely expert. As the controlled (inarticulate?) young American male, Myron McCormick is again in uniform, and always reliable if always the same. Glenn Anders skilfully amplifies the acidulous humor of his part of a shabby playwright. I am not, sadly, one of the fans of Martha Scott—she seems to me to lack vitality, *playing,* and I do not like her voice—but I think this can go down as prejudice: pure, personal and isolated. In conclusion, this will run around the clock, I should judge. (*At the John Golden.*)

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world. It is necessary to state that some two thousand people applauded Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura to numerous encores the other evening although I, for one, felt that the distressing amplification rendered the singing unbearable, particularly as there seemed to be a small interval between the players' pronouncement of the words and the arrival of their sound in the house. Mr. Kiepura's agitated rather than dashing attack as the Prince also seemed somewhat alarming. However, I should like to stress Felix Brentano's staging as rapid, artful, very neat. (*At the City Center.*)

A Note on Bloomer Girl

OWING to a schedule which gives me five openings last week, none this, I think it is simpler slowly to spend my next paper quota on this large offering of John C. Wilson's and Nat Goldstone's. *A Hit, A Hit,* naturally I want to worry it from Overture to Reprise. (*At the Shubert.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Perhaps—For Pastime

EVERY NOW and then appears a film that is excellently produced and well acted by a good cast, but still leaves one rather cold. For my money, such a film is *"Mrs. Parkington."* For two hours it tells its periodic story, adds incident upon incident to build its character portraits, and then comes to no more interesting conclusion than would a couple of hours of backfence gossip about those nasty Parkingtons. It is true that the Major amassed quite a fortune and was frequently referred to as an empire builder, but the movie shows us neither his amassing nor building. It is also true that peeking into one of the Fifth Avenue mansions to see the Christmas gathering of a wealthy family might be a source of entertainment if the people were worth watching. But the descendants clustered around Great-grandmother Parkington (Greer Garson made up to look very old) are not worth a second look and are hardly worth the first.

There's a daughter (Gladys Cooper) whose frayed nerves and mean disposition seem to need frequent nips from the bottle. There's Amory (Edward Arnold), the conniving grandson whose crooked dealing with other people's money will sully the Parkington name but not win sympathy or even forgiveness from his greedy relatives or his own wife. There's a granddaughter whose trail of husbands has so disgusted the family that they are not even civil to her new husband (Rod Cameron), a rancher who could bring a breath of the great outdoors to the decaying Parkingtons if they would have sense enough to let him. Amory's son and daughter enter into the scheme of things too—the son, an ill-mannered young man (Dan Duryea) deserving a sound kick in the pants for telling his disgraced father that he never liked him anyway; the daughter (Frances Rafferty) showing herself as the only one of the brood worthy to be an offspring of the Mrs. Parkington who is really the heroine of this piece.

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More Fall Books November 3

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taken back to the 1870's to learn something of the origin of this "great American family." What we learn in these excursions into the past is that Major Parkington (Walter Pidgeon walking through a rôle that requires very little action) made a lot of money in his silver mines and through other sources, married Susie (Miss Garson looking vivacious and very much younger in a black wig) when her mother who ran a boarding house was killed in a disaster in one of the Major's mines. Young Mrs. Parkington learned to be a lady and proved worthy of the Major's money and love after years of training by the Major's French friend (portrayed with charm and understanding by Agnes Moorehead). But when society's "400" refused to turn up for a party at the Parkingtons' new Fifth Avenue house, the Major went into a rage befitting his irascible temper. For revenge he made a list of the guests who had accepted the invitation and had not shown up; he then set about ruining them on the stock exchange one by one. Susie put a stop to these evil machinations when a worried society matron asked her if she wasn't afraid that her children would be punished for such wicked doings.

The picture never really explains how the descendants of the Major and Susie turned out to be so weak, mean and decadent. Perhaps it intends to, but what it shows mainly is many scenes of affection between the Major and Susie, some excellent sets and a lot of flossy Victorian furnishings; it also shows the ability of the camera to reveal character in a series of short episodes. The most entertaining scene is the one with Susie and Edward, Prince of Wales, after Susie hurries to England because she suspects the Major of philandering. As a matter of fact, Greer Garson is pleasing to watch in all her scenes in this unusual movie. But surely someone connected with "Mrs. Parkington"—Producer Leon Gordon, who spent a large sum of money on it, or Tay Garnett, who gave it some careful thought not moving direction, or Robert Thoeren and Polly James who based their script on Louis Bromfield's novel, should have seen that the film was not getting anywhere. Its moral, if any, seems to be: don't be the great-grandmother of a batch of nasty young 'uns.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Fall Books

Fiction continues to provide the least impressive achievement in current publishing. "Boston Adventure" by Jean Stafford (Harcourt, $2.75) is undoubtedly the most interesting novel of the season. It is a purely imaginary tale which brings together childhood in a Boston slum and young womanhood on the fringes of the city's long-famed high society. It displays considerable promise and is most notable for its literary style. Even more distinguished is "The Leaning Tower" by Katherine Anne Porter (Harcourt, $2.50), a collection of short sketches which continue to reveal the author's poetic sensibility. Aldous Huxley's "Time Must Have a Stop" (Harper, $2.75) continues in the fictional medium that author's quest for spiritual realities, with sensuality having an important rôle in that persistent quest. "Golden Rose" by Pamela

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Hinkson (Knopf, $2.50) competently combines the resignation of two lovers with the ideas so nobly manifested by a small group of French nursing Sisters in India. "Freedom Road" by Howard Fast (Duell, $2.75) is an American historical novel dealing with the problem of the Negro slave who has been freed. The most idyllic love story of the group is "Pastoral" by Nevil Shute (Morrow, $2.50) whose hero is a British flier.

It is a commentary on our times that the most distinguished and successful books now being published are biographies. That seems to indicate that we have our greatest confidence, our warmest feeling, for the past and the men and women who peopled it. Two of the most absorbing life stories are: "We Stood Alone" by Dorothy Adams (Longmans, $3.00) about an American woman who married into one of Poland's leading families and fell in love with Polish ways and ideas; "Partner in Three Worlds" by Dorothy Duncan (Harper, $2.75), the checkered career of a Czech who was born at the turn of the century and has lived through poverty, depression and two wars. In contrast "Trumpet Voluntary" by the English woman, G. B. Stern (Macmillan, $2.75) is difficult to surpass for sheer charm and literary entertainment. Eleanor Ruggles is eminently successful in her biography of Gerard Manley Hopkins (Norton, $3.50). There are two excellent biographies of American labor leaders: "Labor Lawyer" by Louis Waldman (Dutton, $3.50) and "Labor Baron" by James A. Wechsler (Morrow, $3.00). Two founders of religious orders are well portrayed in "Saint Dominic and His Work" by Pierre Mandonnet, O.P. (Herder, $5.00) and "Tar Heel Apostle" (Father Price) by John C. Murrett, M.M. (Longmans, $2.50). An extremely moving biography of a zealous Catholic (Haitian) is "Citizen Toussaint" by Ralph Korngold (Little, $3.00). "Patrick Geddes" by Philip Boardman (U. of N. C., $5.00) is a frank but loving picture of the Scottish scientist and city-planner who could talk and talk on any subject at the mere drop of a hat. The handsomest gift book of the group is Lloyd Goodrich's competent "Winslow Homer" (Macmillan, $7.50). An excellent buy is Henri Gheon's "Secrets of the Saints" (Sheed, $3.00).

Books on the making of the peace continue without ceasing. There are three of them which seem to be outstanding. "The Time for Decision" by Sumner Welles (Harper, $3.00) is as informative as any of them, although not everyone will agree upon the forcible partition of Germany which the author recommends. "The Road to Foreign Policy" by Hugh Gibson (Doubleday, $2.50) is a big improvement over the volume which Mr. Gibson brought out not so long ago in collaboration with Herbert Hoover. Walter Lippmann's "U. S. War Aims" (Little, $1.50) embodies his latest thought on the urgencies of power politics. About as good a study of the Japanese American problem as one could ask for is Carey McWilliams's "Prejudice" (Little, $3.00).

Many of the best volumes of the season belong in what may loosely be called the historical field. "Gravediggers of France" by Pertinax (Doubleday, $6.00), is a painstaking discussion of the fall of France and the men whom the author holds responsible for it. Its sales

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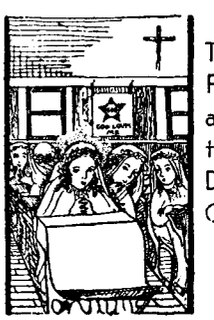

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are said to be exceeding the publisher's most sanguine expectations. "A World to Reconstruct" by Guido Gonella (Bruce, $3.50) is a remarkable, topical rather than chronological, study of the ideas for peace and reconstruction of Pope Pius XII. There are several volumes dealing with various phases of the history of the United States. "The World of Washington Irving" by Van Wyck Brooks (Dutton, $3.75) is a literary-artistic historical study. Dixon Wecter's excellent "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" (Houghton, $3.00) tells in very real and human terms what the problem of demobilization has been from the time of the Revolution onward. "Tailor's Progress" by Benjamin Stolberg (Doubleday, $2.75)—the third outstanding book on labor unions in one season—relates the history of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. "Woodrow Wilson" by Gerald W. Johnson (Harper, $2.00) gives, with pictures, the story of the President whose problems were most similar to those of our own time. "State of the Nation" by John Dos Passos (Houghton, $3.00) manages, by means of a sensitive though impersonal reportage on conditions in our various war production centers, to throw into sharp focus several of the nation's basic social problems. "I Visited the Soviet Arctic" by Ruth Gruber (Viking, $3.50) is a rather expensive new edition of an earlier work which reflects the enthusiasm, courage and confidence of the Soviet scientists and their aides. Volume III of "Lee's Lieutenants" (Scribner's, $5.00) brings Douglas Southall Freeman's major military biography to an eminently successful conclusion.

The best gift books, if not the best volumes for one's own home library, are often in fields which defy the simple classifications of this brief survey. There is, for instance, "The Ashley Book of Knots" by Clifford W. Ashley (Doubleday, $7.50) which leaves little to be said on that subject. Or there is C. M. Joad's extremely clever satire, "The Adventures of the Young Soldier in Search of the Better World" (Arco, $2.00). For popular consumption "The Sad Sack" by Sergeant George Baker (S. & S., $2.00) depicts in the most appealing and humorous way the misadventures of the comic strip character who has justly risen to fame in *Yank*. COMMONWEAL readers will be more interested in some than in others of the authors included in the Portable Library series of the Viking Press; the volumes vary in price from $2.00 to $2.50. One of the latest is "The Portable Shakespeare." A good instance of lively literary criticism of the amusing sort is Vladimir Nabokof's "Nikolai Gogol" (New Directions, $1.50). "The Letters of Alexander Woollcott" (Viking, $3.50) refer to a number of Americans and British of the great and near-great variety. Martha Foley's "Best American Short Stories—1944" (Houghton, $2.75) is again a fine selection. This year it is notable for the fact that it includes so many new and hitherto little known writers. For those interested in the subject, or things at all related to it, "Practical Farming for the South" by Benjamin F. Bullock (U. of N. C., $2.50) is highly recommended. The most notable volume of poetry published in recent months is certainly W. H. Auden's "For the Time Being" (Random, $2.00).

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